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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0196
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 001448

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STATE FOR S/CRS, EAP/K

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRS](#) [KS](#)

SUBJECT: S/CRS AMBASSADOR HERBST'S CONSULTATIONS IN SEOUL

Classified By: Deputy Econ Chief Mike Spangler for Reasons 1.4 (B&D).

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) The U.S. and ROKG held a second round of consultations on reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) issues on April 26. The U.S. delegation led by Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) John Herbst obtained Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) Vice Minister Cho Jung-pyo's commitment to continued talks on potential R&S cooperation in post-conflict situations. Cho also indicated the ROKG is willing to participate in possible quadrilateral meetings that might include Japan, the U.S., and the PRC, or trilaterals with Japan and the U.S.. End Summary.

Vice Minister Cho

2. (C) In an initial call on MOFAT Vice Minister Cho, Amb. Herbst outlined the S/CRS mission to lead and coordinate U.S. civilian capability to prevent and prepare for post-conflict situations and thanked Cho for the ROKG's participation in consultations on R&S issues. Noting Japan and the PRC were also being consulted on potential R&S cooperation, Herbst proposed including the ROKG, Japan, and the PRC in future quadrilateral meetings, if all parties agreed. Cho described the R&S mission as "noble work" and committed to intensify discussions and information exchange on potential R&S cooperation. Cho also indicated ROKG willingness to participate in future R&S meetings that might include Japan and the PRC. Cho stressed that these quadrilaterals, if realized, should be devoted to identifying general R&S capabilities, with an eye on future cooperation, but not specific cases that might warrant cooperation among the parties. Such decisions would have to be made by the ROKG on a case-by-case basis, Cho said. When the Ambassador noted possible GoJ concern about R&S cooperation with the PRC, Cho also noted ROKG willingness to work in a trilateral format with the U.S. and Japan.

U.S.- ROKG Consultations

3. (SBU) The second round of U.S.-ROKG consultations on R&S

issues was co-chaired by Amb. Herbst and MOFAT Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations Park In-kook. The Korean side included representatives from MOFAT, the National Fire and Emergency Management Agency (NFEMA), and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).. (Participant list in para 9.)

¶4. (SBU) MOFAT described in detail ROKG capabilities to respond to both natural disasters and R&S situations. Highlighting the need for rapid decision making and flexibility in such situations, Deputy Minister Park noted the National Assembly had recently adopted the Overseas Emergency Relief (OER) law that will go into effect in October 2007. This law provides a legal framework for the systematic implementation of ROKG responses to disasters, both natural and man-made, during temporary periods of up to 45 days. MOFAT's Development Cooperation Division is formally tasked with disaster response, including training, equipment, coordination and mobilization. To carry out its mission, the Division's budget has grown from USD 4 million in 2006 to USD 10 million in 2007. At present, Deputy Minister Park noted the ROKG is able to move human resources to disasters in less than 24 hours, and shipped construction materials to Jakarta within 24 hours of the massive earthquake that occurred there in May 2006.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Herbst described the S/CRS mission and plans to institutionalize USG civilian capacity to help stabilize and reconstruct states in transition from conflict to peace. He also highlighted S/CRS efforts to recruit a civilian R&S corps under the effective control of the Secretary of State. This corps will be comprised, inter

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alia, of engineers, law enforcement officials, health officials, economists, and public administrators to recreate the basic functions of government in post-conflict situations. The S/CRS team provided materials on S/CRS work to date and welcomed ROKG comment and critique by follow-up e-mail.

¶6. (C) The ROKG delegation reviewed the experience of the ROKG Regional Reconstruction Team currently stationed in Erbil, Iraq. Ambassador Herbst thanked the ROKG for its work there and in Afghanistan -- and noted the new OER law would provide the ROKG statutory basis to undertake additional R&S efforts. In a later aside, Deputy Minister Park told Amb. Herbst that the ROKG is giving serious consideration to what its future presence will be in Iraq and Afghanistan, because the National Assembly troop authorization is unlikely to be renewed by the end of 2007.

Quadrilateral Talks

¶7. (C) During a working lunch, Deputy Minister Park was optimistic that the PRC would show interest in possible quadrilateral R&S consultations with the U.S., Japan, and the ROKG. Park also suggested S/CRS meet with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee to identify additional R&S partners.

NFEMA Visit

¶8. (SBU) In a separate meeting, the S/CRS delegation visited the Seoul office of the National Fire and Emergency Management Agency (NFEMA). Administered by the Ministry for Government and Home Affairs, the Seoul office responds to more than 9,000 emergency calls per day. Approximately 120 officials in three shifts provide 24-hour coverage with simultaneous translation in 16 languages. Before this centralized situation room was created in 2002, all (civil incident/non-criminal) calls were routed to different fire stations throughout the city. The center provides the opportunity for traveling foreigners to pre-register any special medical conditions and needs before arriving in Korea, thereby permitting swifter and more effective responses in cases of medical emergency.

¶9. (U) Participants:

ROKG

Ambassador Park In-kook, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning
and International Organizations, MOFAT

Lee Yong-soo, Director of Development and Cooperation
Division, MOFAT

Do Bong-kae, Deputy Director of Development and Cooperation
Division, MOFAT

Park Sung-il, North America Division III, MOFAT

Shim Pyoung-kang, Director of U-119 Team, NFEMA

Roh, hyun-joon, Chief, Disaster Relief and Reconstruction Team

U.S.

Ambassador John Herbst, Coordinator for Reconstruction and
Stabilization

Scott Rolston, S/CRS Planning Officer

COL William Lee, S/SRS Senior Military Advisor

Mike Spangler, A/Econ Chief, Embassy Seoul

Megan Bartholomew, Econ Officer, Embassy Seoul

Shawn Duncan, Political Officer, Embassy Seoul

¶10. S/CRS cleared this cable.

VERSHBOW